

# Day of the Apkani

By Martin Brady

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Hey there, this is a collection of Short Stories which are related to the Day of the Apkani which I never included in Engines Under Ursus. When I wrote the Apkani episode, I only explained what happened at the end, I did not really explain what happened that day or the subsequent days. It would have taken too much time and taken away from the Engines story proper. So here are a couple of short stories to do with that day. They are not necessarily connected to one another or even in sequence but just lots of fun ideas I had for that day. You need to read the “Apkani” Episode in Engines to understand the context of the attack. However, it's also possible to read these stories stand-alone if you prefer.

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## The Turnpike

Felipe and Armando lay on top of a hill near the New Jersey turnpike as the military prepared their attack on the giant hole which had appeared in the ground. It had swallowed up cars and trucks and people had fled in terror. The gridlock stretched for miles in each direction and the remaining news channels were filled with stories of strange alien creatures which were rising up out of the ground from newly formed sinkholes. The phenomena had hit the East Coast first but it moved westward relentlessly and the news channels dropped off the air one after another until there were mostly emergency signals being broadcast telling people to remain in their homes, store provisions and await

further instructions.

Felipe and Armando had been working in a restaurant when the attack happened and watched as half of their restaurant collapsed into a growing hole and then ran for their lives.

Night was falling on the hill near the turnpike where they were resting up and they looked down into the distance as the military moved in on another one of the holes which had opened. Strange tendrils had begun to snake out of the giant tunnel but stopped after a few meters. Unlike other reports nothing had emerged from this one yet.

Soldiers moved in and then the firing began. Many had flamethrowers and rocket launchers. As they approached they softened up the area for the next wave of the attack.

“Look, tanks!” said Felipe pointing. He had come to America from Guatemala.

“Shh,” said Armando who was a French-Canadian trainee chef.

The tank fired shell after shell into the giant hole in the ground. Then slowly it moved in and the soldiers followed behind.

They disappeared inside it and then the screaming and shouting began followed by more flashes and bangs until suddenly it grew dark and there were no more noises.

Above them the moon rose into the sky and slowly they fell asleep from sheer exhaustion.

In the morning Felipe arose first from his vantage point.

“What do you see?” asked Armando.

“Nothing man,” said Felipe. “The military are gone.”

“Let me see,” said Armando. He took out his binoculars and Felipe was right. Then Armando got up and started to walk down to the turnpike.

“What are you doing man?” asked Felipe.

“I gotta know, stay there if you want,” replied Armando.

“Shit!” muttered Felipe and then followed Armando.

They climbed over the abandoned cars and drew close to the hole in the ground which slowly descended like one that would go under a river. It was the size of a giant hangar. Light filtered in from the outside. Slowly the inner reaches of the tunnel were lit up by the rising sun.

“Holy shit,” said Felipe. The edges of the tunnel had vine tendrils growing along it. They saw what remained of the soldiers and the tanks and their vehicles. There was an upside down tank stuck to the ceiling of the tunnel. The vines had grown all over it and were dissolving it.

Felipe put his hand over his mouth and began to throw up when he saw what looked like fingers and

faces and boots inside many of the vines.

Everything was being dissolved.

Then it started again.

Armando took one step further and touched one of the vines with his shoes. Tiny gossamers threads were ejected in his direction from vines located near him.

One landed on his jacket and he pulled away but as he did a dozen more targeted him from different directions.

One landed on his face and it burrowed into his skin and he cried out.

Felipe grabbed Armando and dragged him away from the tunnel.

The place where the tendrils had touched his skin, took the skin with them. Armando gasped and threw off his jacket which was quickly covered in more tiny tendrils.

He kicked his feet off the ground and quickly moved out of their range, losing one shoe in the process but Armando's skin grew inflamed. Armando watched in terror as his shoe and jacket were dragged back into the tunnel.

Felipe took his his knife and cut around the dissolving skin. He used his first aid skills on Armando, treating the area of attack like a form of burn. He took some supplies and patched Armando's face and legs.

Then Felipe just sat back against a car and shook his head and muttered something to himself in Spanish, covering his eyes.

He smashed his fist off the door of the car and dropped his head.

“What are you saying?” asked Armando.

Felipe looked both angry and scared. “Bad idea man!” He pointed his knife at Armando, wiping the tears out of his eyes. “BAD FUCKING IDEA!!”

## ***The Orphan***

All around the world the underground explosions were felt; a sudden heaving of the ground followed by shock waves that took people off their feet and in some cases leveled buildings. Then it stopped; the Apkani underground devils seemed to lose their purpose and died in their millions. On the city streets which had turned into scenes of horror, many crawled around aimlessly and then stopped as if some kind of signaling mechanism they had been receiving had terminated and they no longer had any purpose. The deadly vines stopped emitting their poisons and toxins and began to wither and die.

Slowly the people began to come out of their hiding places and a few even cheered although the majority did not.

Then the clean up began.

Just outside Las Vegas where one of the largest nests had been situated a small orphan girl climbed out of one of the many Apkani tunnels. She was malnourished and disheveled and used the remains of the withered vines to climb out of the Apkani tunnel.

She wiped her hair from her face and walked towards the city in the Desert following the sign which simply said 'Welcome to Las Vegas'.

Gradually she made it up to the strip. She walked past people who had barely any shoes or clothes on them and had bags tied around their feet. They were filthy looking and many stank from poor hygiene. She looked at them but avoided them.

Slowly she looked up at a large sign which simply said:

Soup kitchen this way.

There was an arrow which pointed in the direction of what had once been a world famous Casino. She dodged the many holes in the ground making sure not to slide into one and then entered the lobby of the casino, moving past the over turned cars, the empty shell casings and the bony human remains. Vines withered on the structure and she looked up at the broken lights and the shattered neon lights.

Inside there was a small queue of survivors waiting to be fed.

She picked up a spare coat which was on offer and wrapped it around her.

A man with a scar on his face pointed her in the direction of the food.

She took a bowl and a spoon and some food was slopped into it.

She looked at it and it was more like water than soup but she said nothing and walked into a room where stars would have once sang daily and made millions of dollars.

She looked down at the discarded medical supplies on the ground and realized this had probably been a make shift hospital once, when all hell had broken loose. Thankfully, now it was over.

She sipped the soup but made a face.

The soup was truly disgusting but she knew she needed to eat something.

She looked around at the other survivors. There were a few kids and some adults and almost no elderly people in the room with her.

She refocused on the soup once more and sipped it slowly.

Then the doors opened to the room and everyone looked around.

Bright light flooded in.

Soldiers in strange silver suits appeared. On the side of their suits were the markings of the US Flag. They carried guns but they were part of their nano-suits with an attached umbilical-like chord.

Slowly, the girl looked down and continued to eat her soup but slowed a little paying no heed to them.

The soldiers were carrying sensors. They checked the family opposite her and then they checked her and then the soldier froze.

He raised his right hand and formed a fist and the other marines moved over to her with their weapons drawn.

Only one of the soldiers had a gold suit and it checked the readings and nodded.

Terrified, the girl recoiled, trying to run away but the marines had her surrounded.

The visor of the gold suit became opaque and she saw the lizard face inside the suit. It grimaced at her and she read the words on its lips as it pointed its weapon at her.

The word that it made was simple and clear.

Apkani.

She blinked slowly and then knew what she must do. She looked above her.

Suddenly, the girl's form seemed to quickly change. Spikes jutted out from her sallow skin and she fired one at the nearest soldiers but it bounced off the armor. Then her spine seemed to crack open, tearing through her clothing and a row of sharp teeth appeared and additional eyes pushed through her arms, back and legs taking in the marine threat. Hooks grew from the end of her fingers.

The Apkani leapt into the air and hooked its hands into the ceiling looking for an escape route but the marines triangulated their fire on the off-spring of the hive. Since the destruction of its nest this high ranking Apkani could eventually form a new one if it could remain undiscovered for long enough. But it was too late.

The advanced weaponry targeted it and blasted it into a stinking mass of pulp and skin.

It dropped onto the ground.

The Marines' leader approached it and then confirmed it was dead.

Then his helmet dropped and his alien face appeared.

The other human marines dropped their helmets too.

“Gather the remains and incinerate. Leave nothing,” he ordered.

The badly shaved marines nodded.

As he walked out of the Casino a kid looked cautiously at the lizard like alien.

“What's your name mister?” asked the little boy who had watched what had happened.

“My name is Bazbakas,” replied the alien. “Now eat your soup,” he ordered and then he walked out into the lobby where there were hundred of one armed bandits, knocked over and broken.

Some people looked on at him curiously.

He took out of his pocket what looked like silver ball bearings and rolled them around in his hand.

“I am looking for volunteers!” he shouted, to the assembled survivors.

## ***Brooklyn***

Detective first grade Elena Castillo parked her car outside her favorite Brooklyn coffee shop for her early morning ritual of a strong cup of coffee and a bagel.

“Hey Elena!” waved Mr Bennett as she walked in and prepared her usual order. The sound of bubbling steam filled the air as the coffee was prepared and Elena took a newspaper off the rack and looked over the contents.

The small shop had only room for a dozen or more customers and there was a small TV at the back of the shop with low sound.

Mr Bennett dropped off the coffee and the bagel and Elena went through her time honored tradition of stirring the coffee clockwise four times and then counter clockwise the same number of times again. Then she tapped the spoon once on the cup which had added the creamer and lifted up the cup.

She closed her eyes and took a sip and then proceeded to eat her Bagel.

The newspapers were full of the usual kinds of stories but her attention was diverted when she noticed everyone in the shop had left their seat and were standing at the back of the shop. One lady had her hand over her mouth as she looked up at what she was seeing.

Elena walked over and saw a picture of Boston as seen by a helicopter and what looked like plumes of steam jetting up from the city streets and other pictures of people running for their lives.

“Some form of attack across the entire city!” said the panicked news anchor from a local station. A looping picture then appeared of dark things emerging from the sunken streets but blurring in and out of focus.

Then suddenly and inexplicably the power in the shop dropped and the TV snapped off. Elena's pager

beeped and outside the shop a car raced by with its sirens blaring, followed by the sound of screeching brakes and the sound of some kind of a crash.

“Everyone stay in here!” said Elena. She reached for her service revolver. She ran to the door of the coffee shop and then the ground started to shake. The people in the shop screamed and dropped to the ground. The front plate of glass to the shop cracked first and then shattered. Elena covered her face instinctively. She looked to the end of end of the block facing west and the traffic was stuck and people were starting to run. The ground around then was cracking and beginning to sink and a cruiser tipped into a growing hole. People shouted and screamed as a hole opened up in the road and then a jet of foul smoke flew up into the air. Even at her distance the smell was strong and pungent. It was sulfurous and like something that was rotting. She began to gag and tried to control her heaving stomach as adrenaline began to take over. Her eyes began to water a little but the people who were very close to the smoke began to cough and collapse.

Mr. Bennett arrived at the shop door with a pump action shot gun.

“Terrorists?” he asked.

“I don't know!” said Elena.

The only way out was to go Eastward but as she looked up to the intersection she saw another sinkhole forming rapidly, cutting them off in both directions.

The building across the road from them began to moan and creek. The Taco Store seemed to subside and split in half. It collapsed into a heap of rubble and then Elena gasped as she saw something coming up from the ground. Whatever they were, they were alive and moving.

A woman to her left screamed and then Elena saw more creatures emerge from the smoke. Some were flying and others were walking. A dozen or more creatures that looked like flying carpets with eyes and sharp edges flew out of the smoke and glided up to the street and then did a flip and attached themselves to the walls of some of the buildings.

Elena watched as a Bicycle Courier tried to escape on his bike and was seen by one of the flying carpets. It dropped off the wall and flew toward the young man on the bike.

“Watch out!” screamed Elena.

The man turned around and the creature glided past him. As it did, it extended blades and cut through the man's neck, killing him almost instantly and then reattached itself to the wall.

Blood spread out from his lifeless corpse.

Elena checked her radio but it was not working and the phone was out, realizing they were jamming communications somehow.

She was considering her options when a man came screaming into the shop with something attached to his back.

“Get it off me!” he screamed and then collapsed, a deadly foam frothing from his mouth.

The weird looking insect that was attached to him looked like a giant Dragon Fly with a tail and dozens of eyes. Its wings began to buzz and it lifted into the air. Mr. Bennett tried to shoot it with his shot gun but missed and it was on him. Elena tried to shoot it but eventually trapped its tail under her foot and shot it in what looked like its head but Mr. Bennett was dead by now.

More insects came in and even one of the flying carpets. It wrapped itself around a customer and he screamed out as it tore his skin off, spraying the small shop with his blood.

Another smaller one with claws landed on a woman and pierced her eyes. She screamed out and tried to blindly escape, falling on the windows sharp pointed edges.

Elena staggered out of the shop firing in all directions and took the shot gun with her. She was coughing more now and the dense, killer smoke was encroaching from both sides. She fumbled for her car keys and pulled a bio-terror gas mask from the boot of her car.

Quickly she put it on and locked and loaded the shot gun.

She ran over to the bike where the young man had fallen and then cycled like hell into center of the smoke, knowing it was the only way out. Something appeared briefly to the side of her which was alien. She kicked it over and kept cycling, trying not to fall into the hole. As she made it out on the other side there were other sink holes around the city but she had some form of escape.

Then she caught sight of one of the humanoid looking creatures which seemed to be co-ordinating the attack. It was an Apkani Sentinel with large oval shaped eyes. She watched as it aimed some kind of weapon at a car which set it on fire and burned the occupants alive.

Elena bit her lip. She knew she could escape but a rage grew within her and she turned her bike around and cycled as fast as she could towards the Sentinel that was firing on other civilians.

She came up behind the Sentinel and hit the brakes, then spun around and lifted her shotgun.

Surprised the Sentinel turned around and then both locked eyes on one another for an instant.

Human eyes met Apkani eyes.

“Welcome to New York,” said Elena, gritting her teeth and she blew its head off.

## ***Drinks With Friends***

Three girls and two boys left the new city of Franklin on a quiet starry evening and drove to the sign which read “Danger – Go No Further!”.

The road ended at this point and they parked and put on their hiking gear.



They climbed under the signs and walked towards the dead city of New York.

All of the empty sinkholes were cordoned off.

Then they walked along the waterline and saw the collapsed bridge.

The statue of liberty lay on its side.

They did not really speak to one another but they just walked in single file.

They heard the howl of some wild dogs and what sounded like a Bear but they were all far away and no threat.

The remaining skyscrapers were without power and silhouetted by the moon.

Trees and wild grass rustled in the wind.

Glass crunched underfoot.

Eventually they came across a skyscraper which was empty.

“Is this the one?” asked the youngest girl.

The lead boy nodded and they walked into the building and climbed the stairs until they had a good view of the long city street below.

There were sinkholes along its length.

“Sleep tight,” said the lead boy.

In the morning, he woke early and the grandeur of the dead city was evident.

They watched some birds fly in and out of the skyscrapers' broken window above them.

The boy turned around and opened his bag where there was some food and beer.

He handed it out.

They raised their glasses and each smiled.

“Happy Saint Patrick's Day,” said the lead boy, smiling widely and they drank.

## ***Messages On The Vine***

As the invasion proceeded in the US, Europe had already been taken over. The Apkani Queen and her strategy drones poured over the different footage of their progeny which had tackled the humans on the surface. The scent messages had been sent down the vine. The footage traveled down the thousands of miles of interconnected scent vines and a couple were of interest to the Queen and her drones.

In Paris on the banks of the Seine, once the city had been taken after heavy fighting, they came across a couple on a bench who had their faces stuck together and their arms wrapped around each other and did not seem to care that Apkani had taken over the City. They were taken away but remained strangely stuck together with their lips.

In Amsterdam, an Apkani wandered up a street where there were female humans behind sheets of glass. The majority made the typical human squealing noise and ran away. However one female waved to the Apkani and seemed to be asking him to enter and called him a Bad Boy. Teams of Drones were assigned to decrypt this strange coded message.

In London's East End a gang of youths offered no resistance but switched on some music and did synchronized defensives dance moves, jumping over one another and doing back flips and making their bodies seem like waves on the ground. The Apkani had not trained for such an attack and then one of the gang threw a brick at its head and incapacitated it. The footage ended there. It appeared according to the Drone that the East End of London had advanced warning of the attack and had practiced Advanced Hive Defense Maneuvers to music.

In Dublin Ireland, an Apkani walked into a crowded place where music was playing and liquids were ingested and one human placed its arm over an Apkani warrior and said, “Come here you Gobshite and I'll buy you a pint.” A very, very large team of Drones had been assembled to understand the meaning of this strange attack. The Drone later suffered severe alcohol poisoning but later recovered.

## ***By The River***

Colorado. 1975.

Stress. It had just been a word for Deke McCann once who lived by a ranch on his own since his mother had passed. He'd heard how other folks felt stress, how they couldn't sleep or eat.

“They should just man up,” Deke used to joke.

Now Deke couldn't eat or sleep. Every night this summer, he was losing Cattle.

The vet had come.

“Darnedest thing,” said the vet. “Never seen anything like it.”

He rubbed his chin.

Then the sheriff arrived.

“Been happening all over the place,” commented the sheriff.

“So what is it?”

The sheriff looked nervous.

“Best guess is that it's coyotes or some kind of wild animal.”

The organs of the cow had been surgically removed. The udder was gone and the tongue was gone and other bits too.

“Looks like they know what they're looking for,” commented Deke as he chewed on some gum.

“They?” asked the sheriff, moving his hat back on his head.

Deke looked up. “I saw some lights in the sky.”

The sheriff took a deep sigh and looked away. “Why don't you go home and get some sleep Deke.

Calling the press and telling them you saw lights in the sky. I'm telling you as a friend, it's not a good idea. People in town are talking about you.”

“What do you mean?” asked Deke.

“They're saying...” However the sheriff paused. “Look just keep those ideas to yourself. Best place for them.”

“All right then,” said Deke. He shuffled on his spot.

Deke went home and went to bed and in the morning, he found two more cattle dead.

Then Deke started to lose sleep and the stress got him.

His stomach knotted up.

He met with some other farmers and they got together and wrote some letters. It eased up for a while and then it started up again.

So Deke decided to camp out by the river and watch the cattle. He carried his gun with him and some special glasses for the night and he brought a powerful flashlight.

Then one night, he heard a sound.

One of the cattle cried out and Deke went to have a look.

He took out his flash light and went down to the side of the river where he found one of his cattle lying on its side. It's tongue was gone but it was still warm.

By a nearby tree, he heard a rustle.

“You leave my Cattle alone!” screamed Deke and he let off a shot.

Several large reflective eyes seemed to move in the dark. He tried to run after them but froze and then blacked out.

When he woke, the sun was coming up.

He made his way home.

Blood trickled from his nose and he cleaned himself up.

"I saw you," said Deke, wiping the blood from his face. "I saw you."

He nodded to himself. The stress started to turn to anger.

## ***Mangy Aliens***

Tennessee, 1971

John Bell stepped out of his black government car wearing his black suit and shoes.

Tyrell Jackson stepped out with him.

"I'll do the talking," said Bell to his young apprentice.

"Should I wear the sun glasses?" he asked.

"Doesn't matter. The important thing is to never smile," said John. "Follow me and bring the box."

Tyrell nodded.

They walked into the state animal laboratories and went up to the first floor, flashing their badges at security who let them through.

Finally they found Professor Nikola Tenneson who was poring over the remains of an animal which had been found on the road by a passer-by. The local news stations had picked it up. The animal had remained unidentified. It had a strange tuft of hair on its back and sharp claws. Local law enforcement were baffled so they sent it to the professor.

"We're here for the coyote," said Bell. He flashed his badge at Nikola which had a high security clearance.

"We haven't determined it's a coyote yet."

"We're here to pick up the coyote with the mange," repeated Bell.

Neither agent smiled.

Tyrell moved beside the professor and placed the remains in the box.

"But..." said Nikola.

"It's a Coyote with mange, right?" said Bell. Both agents looked at Nikola without smiling. "You like working here don't you? Kids are in the local high school. Doing pretty well too. Isn't that right? Kate and Jacob. Wouldn't want to have to move jobs all of a sudden, would you?" said Bell. "This job has good health care cover for your wife's diabetes too, right?"

Nikola looked at the two men.

"Do we have a problem?" asked Bell.

Nikola shook his head. "No, no," he said. "It's a Coyote with mange," he said and stopped looking them in the eye like a small dog having met a giant dog.

"I look forward to your report," said Bell. "And so do my superiors."

They left the building.

"Oh man, you were good!" said Tyrell.

"The key is to never smile and do your research on your target," said Bell.

Tyrell stopped smiling. "Got it."

Bell got into the car first. He looked back at the lab and saw Nikola looking down at them as they took the carcass away.

Bell sighed to himself and muttered under his breath. "I hate this job."

## ***The Offering***

Hopi Lands, Arizona 1979

In the darkness, the boy walked with the Hopi priest towards the sacred mountains. Above them the young boy could see the Milky Way and The Plough. He carried an animal sack used to transport some kind of liquid and a wooden bowl.

His father had given him permission and tonight was an important step towards one day becoming a Hopi priest as well.

The priest was dressed in the traditional costume. His face was painted and he wore feathers in his hair and he chanted lightly to himself.

Eventually they came upon the sacred mountain which had symbols painted on the outside warning the Hopi not to enter and that this place had special religious significance.

The priest walked to the entrance and placed the animal near the entrance and cut its tongue and then sliced open its abdomen, reaching in and spreading out its internal organs.

Then he took the wooden bowl and poured some of the contents into it carefully and sprinkled in some special salts and crystals the priest had found.

The boy watched the ritual carefully and then they retreated to a safe distance and the priest began to chant.

The boy was told to watch the cave but not move no matter what happened.

Eventually something began to stir in the darkness and then the priest sat beside the boy and they watched as a creature inside the cave that looked something like a dog with spines on its back emerged.

The boy's eyes began to water a little.

The animal went over to the bowl with the liquid first and smelled it but discarded it and then strode over to the animal carcass and then let out a strange whine which clicked a little. Within seconds, a humanoid looking person with large dark eyes emerged and the carcass was taken away.

The humanoid creature looked at the priest and the young boy for a moment. The boy's heart raced in his chest but neither moved as the priest had told him.

Slowly the being turned and went back into the cave.

The priest then dropped his head contemplating what had just taken place and then reclaimed the wooden bowl, spilling the fluid onto the ground.

They walked back to the tribe and as they did, the priest showed the boy the bottom of the bowl.

On it there was a carved picture of an Ant person from their folklore with a large head and a small body.

Then the priest pointed at the cave and drew an image in the ground indicating what lay within.

The young boy immediately knew the meaning of the image and nodded.

The Snake people are here, thought the boy.

The priest then walked back to the tribe and began to chant a little as they walked praying for good fortune.

"You did well Antinanco," said the priest finally.

## ***Balloons!***

Calama Chile, Atacama Desert

In one of the driest places on the Earth the South American Apkani Queen launched her strike in coordination with the American and European Queens. Over time each Queen had developed their own distinctive progeny and preferred attack choice. Gradually all the major cities in South America were crawling with Apkani. On the arms of the statue of Christ The Redeemer in Rio De Janeiro winged Apkani serpents watched the city below.

In the city of Calama beside the Atacama desert, Sink holes swallowed up the streets and the city was quickly taken over by flying devil like Apkani which the locals had previously called Chupacabra. They hopped from building to building until the streets were empty and the Apkani devils finally disappeared.

German Geologist Frank Steiner and his team of three researchers decided to make their escape from a shop they were hiding in to the car across the road which they had found keys for.

Their guide Emilio took the first steps out of the shop but halted for a moment when he looked up and saw that the sky above the city was covered with hundreds of thousands of what looked like floating speckled colored balloons and some kind of webs dropped down from them.

The two researchers Heike and Silke shouted in English at Emilio. “Go! Go!”

If they could make it to the car, then they could hopefully drive out of the city to some form of relative safety.

However as Emilio tried to cross the road he became entangled in some of the fine lines attached to one of the balloons above. The more Emilio tried to struggle free, the more entangled he became. Franz tried to help but he became entangled too.

“Gehen, um das Auto!” shouted Franz, telling them to get to the car.

They looked up and the attached balloon was descending on them. The vines were cutting into their skin and binding them tighter so that they could hardly move.

Emilio screamed out as the rapidly descending balloon landed on them and they saw the teeth and eyes along its balloon shape which on contact with his face and limbs tore his body apart. Franz' shape could also be seen writhing under the deflating balloon until he was dismembered and quickly digested by the Apkani. Then it flattened out and tiny legs sprouted from its edges and it took another form. Its



attention turned to the car and scuttled over to it on its thousands of legs and hooked tendrils.

Heike was trying to start the car when the Apkani covered the whole car and tried to cut its way in. The sound of its claws scraping against metal grew louder as it tried to find a way in. Silke screamed out and then the car engine came on.

Heike gunned the engine and dragged the Apkani along the road unable to see where she was going. Determined, she accelerated as much as she could and then the Range Rover smashed into a shop front and the Apkani was thrown off the car.

Heike then reversed the car and attempted to make her escape, burning tire rubber against the dry road as she exited the city.

## ***The Loch***

Loch Ness, Scotland, 1977

It was the final night of the expedition to Loch Ness to see if proof could be found of the sea creature's existence better known as Nessie. The television crew had packed up their equipment and were flying home to America. All of the side sweep sonar technology was ready to be taken off the boat the following morning from the boat called The Naughty Lassie which was a tongue-in-cheek Scottish joke based on the famous ship called The Nautilus.

The two lead cryptozoologists who had acted as the experts on the show sat on either side of the attractive female journalist Shannon Sharapsky.

They shared a small drink of Scotland's famous whiskey and the Norwegian expert Dag Larsen called it a night.

"I give you permission to wake me if you see Nessie!" smiled Dag and he retired to his room for the final night of the trip. He saluted them. "Goodnight!"

Shannon looked at Terry who was from London and she placed her hand on his shoulder. "I think you were better on camera," smiled Shannon. She lowered her voice. "But don't tell Dag."

"Really, very kind of you," said Terry. He pushed his professor like glasses back up along the bridge of his nose, and straightened his droopy mop of hair a little. "Between you and me, I've read his book and you cannot believe the number of logic flaws not to mention his grammar is simply appalling too." Terry grinned in his goofy way and Shannon nodded.

"That is exactly what I was thinking!" She reached her hands back, showing off her thin figure and Terry tried not to stare too much.

"So what do you think?" asked Terry. "Is there a sea monster out there or a big fish?"

“My heart tells me sea monster but my mind is saying Sturgeon.”

The boat bobbed up and down near Castle Urquhart where the most amount of sightings had occurred. Gradually the sun was setting on the Scottish highlands.

“So I never caught where you were from? Too busy with the news crews,” said Terry, trying to get to know Shannon a little better.

“Oh, I'm from Nevada originally. My parents like to travel from place to place to get a taste of it, if you know what I mean,” said Shannon.

“Of course! Travel opens the mind,” said Terry.

“I spent some of my childhood in Chile, near the Atacama desert,” explained Shannon. “My parents like dry climates but I think I prefer wetter ones. It's all a matter of breeding I guess.” She sipped her drink and looked at the deep waters of the loch. “My parents came here a long, long time ago when they were younger and recommended I visit the loch.”

“My lord! How long is that?”

Shannon smiled. “About sixty five years ago. They had me quite late in life.” She paused thoughtfully. “I like Europe, I think I might settle here.”

Terry nodded.

“A few of my parents' friends visited here recently, dropping in and out and said it was still as perfect as ever,” explained Shannon. “Do you know that there are even underwater caves here?”

“Of course! I dedicated a whole chapter to them in my book,” boasted Terry. “I know the exact location of every one!”

Shannon rubbed her arms as it grew cold.

“You know Terry, I find you very interesting,” said Shannon. “It's not often I find a man with your level of knowledge and taste. Would you mind coming back to my cabin. I've a few questions on the loch and its structure I think only you know the answer. I need it for the article I want to write.”

Terry smiled. “I would be honored!”

They walked back to her warm cabin which for the most part consisted of a bunk, a chair and a table.

She locked the door.

Terry clapped his hands together. “So what would you like to know?” asked Terry.

“Everything that is in your mind,” said Shannon. She began to take off her clothes and her skin rippled in a rather strange way like there was something moving underneath it.

Terry dropped his glass and raised his eyebrows. “Oh my Lord!” said Terry.

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It was in the middle of the night when Dag Larsen felt something large strike the boat. An alarm was sounding when he woke up, and he found that his cabin was filling up with water.

Panicked he pulled open the door to his cabin. Two doors up and to the right was where Terry was staying. He checked the room and he was not there.

Dag then opened the door to the American's room. “Shannon!” shouted Dag but when he opened the door, the water was full of blood and body parts.

He placed his hand over his mouth and then the ship shuddered to the right like it was being dragged by a violent current.

The water was up to his waist now and he climbed to the deck of the ship.

In the distance a distress flare shot into the air, maybe more than two miles away. The mysterious current had dragged the boat away from the other survivors who had abandoned the ship. It settled into its new isolated location now.

“Hello!” shouted Dag but it appeared that there was no-one else on the boat but him now.

He looked for a life boat but there was none and he put on a life jacket.

The nose of the ship was lifting as the ship began to sink.

With no other choice, Dag jumped into the cold water and gasped. The shore was about a mile away. Behind him the ship sank and he was left all on his own.

It was then that he saw it in the water.

The serpent closed in on him, first showing its curving shape on the surface of the water.

“No! No!” gasped Dag.

It circled him and then it raised its head from the water.

The face of the serpent moved close to Dag and it was beautiful.

“Shannon!” gasped Dag.

“Hey there handsome,” smiled Shannon, “fancy meeting you here”, she said and then she took him.

## ***Rupert***

Rupert Waddington sat in front of a panel of Generals and politicians.

The war with the Apkani was officially over.

“Where's Nigel?” asked Rupert.

“He's in a coma,” said the lady to his immediate left.

Rupert looked upset.

“Is this the radio you used to co-ordinate the attacks on the nest?” asked a general.

The battered radio set lay on a table.

Rupert shrugged. “I guess so. But I'm not sure it was even working.”

“But you did use this radio?” insisted a man in a Washington DC suit.

“Yeah, sure, I guess,” replied Rupert. He scratched his hand where the burns were.

The group conferred.

“Where's Bazbakas?” wondered Rupert.

“He's gone. I do hope you realize the gravity of the situation here Mister Waddington. You say you are from Lowestoft in the United Kingdom.”

“Well technically I live outside Lowestoft at the cross-road between the Pub and the local accountants,” explained Rupert. He scratched his chin. “What's this all about anyway?” he asked.

“Well Rupert,” said the chairman. “It's the unanimous decision of this committee that you just saved planet Earth.”

Rupert sat back and his eyes went wide open.

“Do you have anything to say?” asked the chairman.

“You're shitting me,” replied Rupert.

## ***The Nest***

Bazbakas took his team of hand-selected volunteers deep into the European nest. He explained to them

the structures that the all nests adhered to and stood outside a pressure door which was an Apkani muscle sheet that dripped some form of mucous.

In the heart of the nest, the outside temperature was hot enough to boil water but the suit kept the marines alive.

Bazbakas knew that the next room would be the hardest.

“Whatever you see in here you must not stop,” said Bazbakas. “They cannot be saved. Our mission is to save those on the surface.”

Each marine wore a suit which had modified itself to look like a high ranking Apkani and appropriate color coding.

“Do not stop, keep walking,” urged Bazbakas.

He walked towards the muscle sheet and it opened, recognizing the scent trail of the suit.

Once inside, the team walked inside the giant chamber that was the breeding chamber. It was littered with pods of different sizes. The walls and ground were crawling with different types of Apkani workers. Some looked like spiders while others were like ants but had many more eyes. There were even what looked like blind Apkani that organized and cleaned.

The first thing that hit the human team apart from how busy it was, was also how noisy this giant chamber was.

It was like being at a big event with hundreds of thousands of people, all making some kind of noise.

They walked past the pods of various sizes and saw the heads of creatures of every shape and size sticking out from the pods. Inside the green slimy pods they saw new Apkani life forming, feeding off the attached life which was slowly dying. However, the animals were not dead, they were in some kind of quasi life-like form. Goats bleated. Sheep baaed and chickens clucked as they were digested and eaten by the Apkani grubs inside.

“Keep walking,” insisted Bazbakas as they came to the human section. There were people of every race and size.

“It's chilly today,” said one woman who had her eyes closed and was attached to one of the larger pods. “I had to dig out some snow.”

“The traffic is simply awful!” complained another. “I'm going to be late for work.”

“Can I interest you in an insurance policy?” shouted another man.

Then they walked past some transparent fluid chambers that had life forms which looked familiar to them. Dogs, cats and even some farm animals were taking shape as they were being grown.

“Apkani similars, bred by the nest for surface infiltration,” explained Bazbakas. “Stay away! Keep walking.”

## ***The Hooded Man***

In one of the most outlawed parts of the Perseus sector a variety of wealthy aliens sat and watched how players competed on the dead surface of a planet for either freedom from prison or for a crypto credit prize for completing the games.

Each gambler who watched the games had a console with multiple windows.

They gambled on whether players would live or die and what decisions would be made by them.

They gambled on the truth and honesty of the players.

They counter-gambled on their deceit.

They created barriers for the players.

Some gamblers bet directly against one another in the ego games' rooms.

The gambling rooms were dark, placed on the side of an asteroid which orbited the dead world.

The stakes were always high and there were no house limits.

In one such room, an alien sat and watched as players entered a rigged part of the city.

One high stakes gambler pondered his choices.

As he did, the door opened and a hooded man entered the room.

“Are you the one who makes the suits?” inquired the hooded man.

“This is not my place of work,” responded the gambler. He cracked open some shells and drank the fluid.

“I have some work for one with your skills.”

“I do not need work,” replied the gambler. “Right now what I need is luck.”

He looked at his failed bets.

“Can you give me luck?”

The hooded man raised his arms. “You will not need luck when you consider my offer.”

He tossed a card on the table with more crypto-credits than the gambler had ever seen.

“This is the advance,” replied the hooded man. “The rest upon result.”

“If I win my next bet, I will consider it,” replied the gambler, turning the offer into a gamble.

He sat back and watched the team moved forward through the dead city on the alien world.

He gambled they would make it to the next check point but one would fail.

“The place?” inquired the gambler as he waited for the result.

“Some call it Earth,” said the hooded man.

He threw a holo chart and the gambler glanced at it.

“What of COTASE?” asked the gambler, noting the location.

“I will arrange safe passage.”

“Quiet!” replied the gambler as the game played out.

He nodded as his bet succeeded and his account was crypto credited.

“The target?” he asked.

A sheet appeared with his instructions which he scanned and memorized.

The sheet then fizzled away.

A holo-image of an Apkani nest appeared.

He considered.

“I accept all conditions,” said the gambler.

“All I need now is your bio-signature,” replied the hooded man.

The gambler turned and looked as he was bio-scanned and spoke his name.

“Bazbakas.”

## ***The Council***

The Orion System, Zeta Reticula Prime, The Maja Caverns Complex

Deep in the mountains the high council assembled. The Brown Reticulun High Council gathered dressed in their traditional High Council garments.

The Crystal cavern they sat inside glowed with Nembreni Energy as they communed with the Old Ones that had been there since the formation of the planet.

A messenger arrived and then quickly left. They watched information gathered by their spies as the Apkani nests on Earth were cleared out one by one by Bazbakas and in the last minutes of the war on Earth an immature nest Queen had escaped from the Asian continent.

“Was it intercepted?” asked the High Council leader telepathically.

A reply came from another member. “No, it escaped in accordance with the Prophecy.”

“Good,” replied the leader.

“Bazbakas also retrieved our fallen friends on Earth. The human bases were overrun by the Apkani as you predicted and their retrieval was eased greatly because of the confusion,” spoke the voice of a general.



“Ensure that they are given the proper burial rites,” said the leader, pushing his sadness out to the group.

They all dropped their heads.

“May their paths be clear now,” prayed the spiritual leader.

The crystal caverns glowed a little dimmer as the powerful Nembreni moving in the crystals sympathized as well and the next steps were dwelt upon.

## ***Author's Note***

I hope you enjoyed these short stories to do with the Day of the Apkani. Below are a series of Twitter style short stories to do with this idea.

# "Manhattan" Two office enemies are trapped in an underground skyscraper and must climb to the surface before Apkani get them.

# Two psychic twins take their psychic grand daughter to safety in the mountains but see their futures but still must try save their family.

# In a US training mountain range, two Brit search and rescuers end up underground when the Apkani attack and fight for their lives; Rupert and Nigel. Rupert deep fries an Apkani when it attacks him in the kitchen.

# Survivalist Deke who lives in Tennessee and who is expecting the Apkani attack. Lost cattle. Abducted before. Payback time!

# Queen Apkani off-spring hops into space ship and blasts off from coast of Asia.

# Sands Hotel Nevada. Agent Muldoon sits with X and shares a beer. It's 1973. Muldoon talks about his vision of things. X realizes what it's like to be an individual; to have hopes and aspirations. Shows X Elvis who throws sweaty towels on women. His scent trail is impressive, says X.

# Yellow Cab NY. A terrified woman gets a taxi when the attack happens but the cabbie gets her to her stop dodging the Apkani and asks for twenty dollars. Zadzil Vopla

# People on boat. Dead spot in sea. Marine biologists investigate. They are attacked by flying Apkani jellyfish with teeth and then a large creature surfaces.

# Marines prepare to enter nest, Bazbakas explains the outer defense mechanism of the nest

# Rebellion. A breakaway group of Apkani become addicted to certain hormones in organs and threaten to break X's treaty before the arrival of the hive queen

# Humans and some Apkani guides attack the break away faction shortly before the Queen arrives

# Crazy five star general showdown with X over abductions. Something must change!

# An angry mob gather around a man who proceed to beat him up and burn his book but they are unaware they have been tracked by Apkani dogs who are addicted to human hormone; the pack that will begin the Apkani rebellion.

# The Test - In a secret research facility a technician tries out a test vaccine to determine what is an Apkani similar and what is not.

# A teenage girl in final year of high school falls for an Apkani boy who is full of corny luvy-duvy dialog.

# Try outs - Ralph fails the try out miserably. Rupert and Nigel do a mock "Convoy song" speech between them when he is given the radio and told to sit in the corridor and wait. The radio does not work. Then the Apkani attack.

# In the Forbidden City in Beijing, Apkani arise and are met by Martial Art experts. Father and son, fight their way from room to room.

# On an oil rig right off the coast of Japan near Fukushima a giant Apkani sea monster severs the oil pipe and proceeds to climb as a fire breaks out on board the rig. Fire, oil and Apkani.

# The Photo. A college freshman is held in an underground interrogation cell. Agent Muldoon tries to find out how the he got hold of a photo of X and pasted it all over a college campus.

# The Interview - Rupert has an interview with crazy news anchor to tell his story of the last moments in the tunnel. Anchor had been fired but got his job back now that there are no others left. They're back on air. Anchor gives monologue about how an intelligent species is back in charge thanks to people like Rupert (take that you Apkani!) and he finishes up by telling his female anchor how hot she looks and how he will happily repopulate the earth with her. I am available, he says. She just makes a face like she want to get sick.

# The Locker - A mother who is in Cancer remission and her twenty year old daughter in the mid 1990s spend their days buying discarded lockers and turning a profit on it. One day they buy a locker which contains an alien looking object and a map leading into the desert in Arizona where it appears there are some larger hidden alien artifacts from a deceased man called Muldoon. They are unaware of his work with the Apkani.

#The Protocol – A man walks into a secret room in an underground base with a manuscript. He connects with a wider group over an encrypted communications system and asks them have they read it. It details their alien plans. They answer one at a time that they have. X is one of the faces on the screen and looks unhappy. The chairman asks should they implement the protocol on the writer and they press their buttons, agreeing to it. The writer's name is added to a book with people from the past who have been subjected to the protocol. Some of the names are famous while others are not and range from all walks of life. The heading simply reads 'Isolate And Diminish'.

#Climbing Apollo – An astronaut on board one of the Apollo missions spots a UFO not far from his craft and records it with his camera and says euphemistically to mission control that Santa Claus exists. It moves under his craft and then he gets a shock when he sees a small multi-legged alien walking along the outside of his craft, checking it out.

#Whirlpool – An exploration vessel off the coast of Japan experiences weird weather. A fog descends on the ship and they find themselves on the edge of a giant whirlpool. Then everything goes dark and they all wake up in a giant warehouse under the surface of Mars near Cydonia. The warehouse is full of skeletons and other ships, some of which are ancient and others are modern. They have to fight their

way out and try to figure out a way to get home again.

#Y - In the early 80s Muldoon meets a new Apkani companion to work with called Y. Y is a female human familiar and the need for the mask and goggles is removed. She exudes pheromones and takes an apartment near Muldoon's work integrating into human society. He slowly falls for her, eventually having an affair with her which nearly destroys his marriage when his wife figures out there is someone else but she cannot prove it. He ends up spending large amounts of time away from home and his relationship with his wife is strained. He begins to realize Y is part of some kind of Apkani program for total integration and control of human society as Y under an assumed name enters society and mixes outside his circle of friends with ease. The lines begin to blur as to what is alien and what is human but he is afraid to speak up remembering what happened to his predecessor when he voiced concerns.

#Testing Muldoon - Late 1980s, Muldoon wakes up to find a very tall alien in his home he has never seen before. The nameless alien offers him a job to work for the Others and tells him the truth about what is really going on in relation to the Apkani deal and where it is ultimately headed. Muldoon's loyalties are tested.

#The Battle – In the ruins of a new world after the defeat of the Apkani, Human Alliance takes over and becomes a Geo Political force only to encounter a new potent enemy called The Others – a loose collection of Humans and Aliens who regard themselves as the rightful owners of planet Earth stemming all the way back to the start of human development and its emerging civilization. This war is a battle of History and of Hearts And Minds.

#The Man Who Owns The Earth - A man wanders into Franklin as a new museum is opened with art moved from New York. He sits and looks at the paintings and strikes up a conversation with a woman beside him. She asks him what he does for a living. He smiles and tells her he is an investor and that he owns the Earth and his descendants have been here for thousands of years. Both laugh. She smiles telling him that she likes a man with a good sense of humor and they go out on a dinner date. Little does she know he is the leader of the Others.

#Y++ - Y assumes a new identity as a rich entrepreneur and mixes with the rich and famous. Other similars join Y secretly. A plan is hatched to destroy Muldoon because he knows too much. They also plan to disable the communication systems that need to be shut down when the Apkani leadership orders that they rise and take over the surface completely.

#Bell And Muldoon - Muldoon has lost his job and his family. On a rainy night he visits John Bell's grave and comes up with a plan to hide some of the Apkani technology that he acquired over the years as a last desperate act. He is all out of options.

#The Key - A disheveled man walks into a Crack den looking for a fix. He is shrunken and unwashed. Under his unkempt beard is the man who was once Muldoon but is barely recognizable. He pulls out a key and with a shaking hand tells the Drugs Dealers he can give them alien technology in exchange

for some drugs. He is laughed at and spat on and beaten then thrown out. A runner who works for the leader of the den secretly pockets the key but finds the locker has been sold because of non payment to a mother and daughter.

#To the surface - As the Apkani rise across the world, the similars shut down communication systems but soon find themselves hunted by Bazbakas and his kill bots which can detect their presence.

#The Fight - The mother and daughter who buy the locker find some of the artifacts activate on the day that the Apkani attack. They use the weapons to defend themselves in a fierce fight and survive on The Day of the Apkani.

#The Old Man In The Black Suit - An old man visits the mother and daughter in the weeks after the defeat of Apkani. He says : I think you have something that belonged to me. He takes off his hat and it's a scarred Muldoon who is vindicated and broken-hearted but who got his old job back in the aftermath of the attack. He tells them the whole sorry story of what happened since the deal was signed and the daughter fights back tears. He will be asked to testify soon while the whole world watches and then will become one of the founders of Human Alliance. John Bell will also be remembered and his story told through the Official Human Alliance Library to each successive generation.

The End.